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Chapter 8

Social Media

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8.0 Learning Outcomes

In this chapter you will:

- understand the dynamics of social media-based communities, their composition and behaviours
- learn to conduct a social media audit including competitor analysis
- recognise the importance of a blog as a centre of digital presence development
- use amplification strategies to develop brand presence
- explore the concept of social capital and its relationship to brand engagement activities
- develop tactics for measuring social media based, their quality and quantity

8.1 The importance of social media

Social media channels are among the most popular channels for online interaction. Organisations are recognising this trend and increasingly telling their story through social channels in ways that show their human side. In countries with high social media adoption rates, including the UK, the majority of users tend to avoid paid advertising material (Davies, 2015). As a result of this avoidance natural or organic social media optimisation (SMO) is very important to the success of your marketing strategy.

Social media channels connect people and enable them to communicate between themselves and with your organisation. In distinction, the term, “social media platform”, emphasises technological infrastructure, such as a website and or the applications which facilitate interaction.

The *Conversation Prism* developed by Brian Solis and JESS3 (see conversationprism.com) highlights the range of social media channels that are currently available. These platforms offer a range of options for engagement with your buyer persona, but you do not need to use all of these. You can filter out the irrelevant and marginal channels by understanding the diversity of options and identifying those that best connect with your buyer persona. Once you have identified the channels preferred by your buyer persona you can evaluate if there is an opportunity for opening another avenue of conversation. The decision to engage on a

channel is an aspect of your channels sub-strategy within the Buyer Persona Spring (see Chapter 0) and with this decision you are shaping your overall strategic direction.

The *Conversation Prism* emphasises the strategic use of social media beyond marketing functions to include sales, customer service and operations. In this chapter, for the purpose of simplification, we will differentiate between social networks that are primarily for business to business (B2B) or business to consumer (B2C) interactions. In reality, most platforms can equally play a role in both B2B and B2C settings.

8.2 Social media strategies

Social media interaction broadly falls into four main functions - marketing, sales, operations and customer service (Figure 8.1).

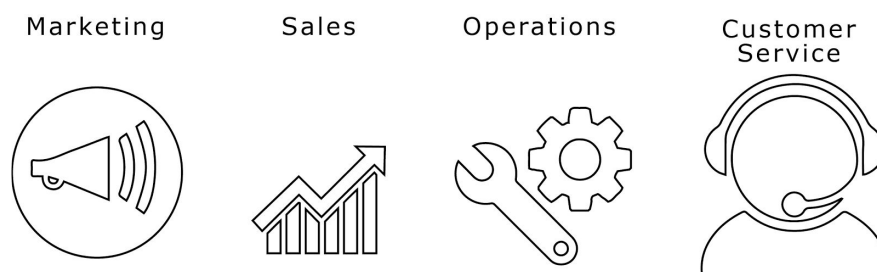


Figure 8.1: Main functions for social media use

When you open a social media channel of communication you should be conscious of the different applications and techniques expected for each function and the results through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measuring their success (Table 8.1)

Marketing

Application	Techniques	KPIs
Use conversation to understand your buyer persona's needs	Survey your buyer persona about their interests	Improved buyer persona understanding
Gather feedback about your brands, products and services	Use competitions to encouraging co-creation	Up-to-date contacts
Offer high quality content about your offering	Amplify and encourage positive feedback	Positive brand mentions
Encourage positive reviews and learn from negative experiences	Identify and support charitable causes that are important to your buyer persona	Engagement numbers
		Social capital acquired

Sales

Application	Techniques	KPIs
Identify influencers and engage them in mutually beneficial ways	Brand ambassador programs for endorsing your products and services including exclusive information, offers and benefits	Sales numbers Number of brand ambassadors
Involve your influencers in interactions and co-creation as part of your extended “sales” team	Affiliate marketing agreements giving direct recognition for individual sales	Number of affiliates Social capital acquired
Customer Service		
Application	Techniques	KPIs
Customers log their support questions online so that they can be resolved publicly	Develop support focused forums on your website or owned social media channels which give the option to moderate	Number of support issues resolved online Volume of publically available and indexed support topics
Enable customers to help one another and solve problems related to your products and services on your platforms	Create support dedicated accounts on networks such as <i>Twitter</i>	Number of participants in online support interactions
	Reward community participation and support with intrinsic motivators	Decreased volumes of support phone calls, emails and other private interactions
		Social capital acquired
Operations		
Application	Techniques	KPIs
Internally focused interactions that act as knowledge management tools	Use private social networks for internal interactions that support your organisation	Percentage of organisation participating in maintaining organisational knowledge
Help each other find better ways of doing their job	Enable public interactions to show a human side of your organisation	Volume and accuracy of internally available documents preserving
Platforms for sharing internal communications		

Decreased volume of
email and attachments

Case Study 8.1: *Public Desire*

Instagram

Q Search

Get the app

Log in



publicdesire

FOLLOW

www.publicdesire.com Worldwide Shipping Available 🌐💕 Sassy Shoes For The
Not So Basic💕 Got a Q? help@publicdesire.co.uk 📧 Click Below To Shop 🛒
bit.ly/21tSFaH

3,324 posts

706k followers

582 following



The reasons for engaging with a brand such as *Public Desire* on social media can be grouped broadly into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors. Extrinsic motivation refers to rewards that originate externally to an individual - social media related examples of this include competition prizes, money, praise and acknowledgments. Intrinsic rewards

originate inside an individual - social media related examples include mastery of a subject, love, curiosity, belonging, learning and autonomy.

While a brand can develop its social media presence using competitions, the motivators being applied should be a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic competition rewards, in particular, those that have material benefit and should not be used too frequently, as there is a tendency to attract people who have only a superficial connection to a brand (Heinze, et al. 2013).

To develop a sustainable online community such as *Public Desire*, the key emphasis should be placed on the intrinsic motivating factors such as pride in belonging to a brand, curiosity and learning. *Public Desire* crowdsources understanding of what their customers like by offering them the opportunity to share their preferences of shoes. These stated preferences are then translated into products, which the same customers can purchase. The motivation for the followers here is both intrinsic - being able to buy and wear a pair of shoes that they like - as well as extrinsic, by being acknowledged by the organisation for the shoes that are designed around their own preference. A key mechanism for fostering intrinsic motivation in your brand is to offer high quality information that resonates with your audience (Poor Rezaei and Heinze, 2014). The importance of high quality content for social media connects with the SEO (Chapter 7) and content marketing (Chapter 9) chapters. In the case of *Public Desire* this high quality content is represented by reporting the latest news in shoe fashion.

Source: www.publicdesire.com

8.3 Social capital and social media

In Table 8.1, one of the KPIs that is used for measuring success in social media engagement is social capital. There are different types of capital - physical capital refers to objects such as machines, buildings and computers. Human capital refers to labour, creativity and the knowledge of people. Social media, in contrast, is primarily concerned with social capital.

Social capital is the value of all your social networks, the connections between people and the levels of trust that exists for your brands (Putnam, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 5, social capital is one of the reasons why digital campaign planning does not always have direct costs associated with them since social capital is difficult to quantify in financial terms. Social capital in the form of social connections and embedded trust are crucial to the functioning of social media. Social capital is the lifeblood of social media channels and understanding how this form of capital works is critical to the effective use of social media in digital marketing.

Social capital has three different types (Woolcock, 2001). These are described as bonding, bridging and linking social capital. With a social media focus, these three types of social capital can be defined as,

- Bonding social capital - are the closest social connections. These connections are found between you and family members, friends, work colleagues, your employees (if you have any) and perhaps similar types of people from similar backgrounds, location or those with shared interests. Loyal and happy customers who are also your brand advocates could also be considered part of this group and are the core informants in shaping your buyer persona.
- Bridging social capital - includes connections with people from across different groups and barriers. These may be acquaintances, friends of friends or secondary connections. An occasional associate, client or customer of your organisation would be part of this category.
- Linking social capital - is the broadest and weakest of connections. This type of social capital reaches out to people across the globe. Many of these people will be unfamiliar to your buyer persona and are unlikely to benefit directly from your products and services. However, the aim of engaging with these connections is to find those who would be familiar to your buyer persona and the opportunity for your organisation to create stronger ties with them. This type of social capital also provides the pool from which recommendations and referrals can develop.

Each of these different types of social capital play different roles in different campaigns. If you are prospecting for your buyer persona, it is wise to reach out as far as possible between groups and use the power of networks to increase your social brand value (Fueller et al., 2011). Having millions of people talking about your brand globally can help your brand awareness KPIs, however, it may not help you to reach your conversion KPIs, if you do not successfully connect with your buyer persona.

You should not ignore the value of linking social capital. There is potential power in weak ties amongst a larger volume of people (Widdop et al., 2014). In social media terms, linking social capital provides you with those followers who do not engage, or who may be your buyer persona but are not yet aware of your presence. An overall goal for your marketing strategy is to use the combination of content, channels and data to make those with the weakest social capital connections become more strongly connected with you and your organisation.

8.4 Online communities

Building on the concept of social capital, there are other ways to consider online communities. The 1% rule of Internet culture divides online users into three categories as 1% creators, 9% contributors and 90% lurkers (Figure 8.3).

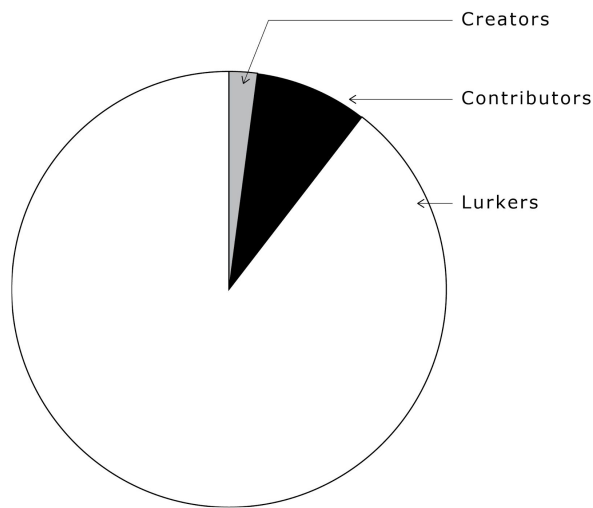


Figure 8.3: The 1% rule of Internet culture

Observation of this distribution comes from naturally occurring online communities.

- **Creators** – are approximately 1% of an online community. This 1% consists of the people that visit social media regularly and actively create content (Fueller et al., 2011). They have a strong tie with the community and are usually key influencers. Identifying the creators for your brand and building your social capital with them will refine and focus your buyer persona while also influencing your online community.
- **Contributors** – approximately 9% of the community regularly post to social media. This group are not as influential as creators but they have a good understanding of the digital landscape in relation to your brand. Not all brands will have creators but you should always be able to find contributors. For example, search for your brand and products or services names on a social network and see if anyone mentioned you. These individuals might be interested in writing a post for your blog which they can then amplify through their own networks.
- **Lurkers** - The majority of your community, the 90%, will consume your content, but almost never post or contribute to social media (Ferneley et al., 2009). These are the silent listeners and readers. Lurkers are the vast majority of your audience, so it is important to keep them engaged in a way that keeps them comfortable. For example, lurkers can be engaged through low level interactions such as subscribing to your social media feed, blog feed or mailing list. Monitoring the behaviour of lurkers through analysis of visits lets you learn more about your wider audience. A regular mistake in thinking about social media is to assume that low social media engagement means that nobody is listening. However, this assumption means you might be forgetting about the 90%.

8.5 Cultures

Culture is the way we do things and it is important to recognise that it differs. You are trying to reach people around the world who are enmeshed in different cultures. The global reach of social media is a key reason for organisations rethinking their marketing strategy (Tiago

and Verissimo, 2014). Consider each culture that you are targeting separately. You need to develop knowledge and experience of what type of content is best delivered through which channels, in the right language and tone at the right time, in order to produce positive engagement. Your own research into each culture that you want to connect with will be important to understand individual nuances and preferences. Even, if you are simply trying to reach people in your own language and timezone, it is still important to consider more regional cultures.

Culture does not neatly align with national boundaries or equate to a common spoken language. Within a single country, different groups behave differently depending on location, heritage, education, age and experience. Identifying the culture of your buyer persona will shape what social media platforms you will use and how you can best engage with them. Social Media Analytics data can tell you something about the country, city, devices and interests of your buyer persona (Kaushik, 2009). Social Media Analytics will also tell you which social networks are driving traffic to your website - the overall goal of your social media efforts. Becoming knowledgeable about the culture, habits, likes and dislikes of your buyer persona is essential (A cultural awareness of your buyer persona is part of the development process discussed in Chapter 3). This can be done through a combination of digital tools that measure and record, that are explored later in this chapter, as well as communicate with your buyer persona.

8.6 Sustainability of your social media platform

Social media platforms come and go and there are major geographic differences when it comes to managing and developing social media activities. This presents a challenge for your organisation. For example, *Facebook* is a good network for business to consumer communications in Europe and North America, however it is currently blocked in mainland China (see full list maintained on Wikipedia for blocked sites in China and other countries). An alternative and more robust approach is to adopt the tactic of creating a blog that is hosted on your organisation's website and is used as the main hub for engagement with your online community. A blog should be at the centre of your channel sub-strategy implementation (Figure 8.4).

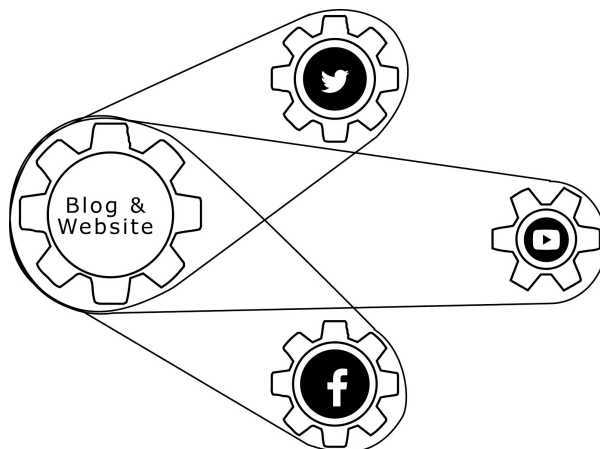


Figure 8.4: A blog and website are pivotal channels in your social media strategy

A blog is your key owned channel for creating synergies with other channels and should also be the central hub for your content sub-strategy. Your blog enables amplification across your owned channels and provides content that your buyer persona can share across a wider network of channels.

8.7 Blogging platforms

A blog provides a good way to combine text, images, video and other media into high quality content. There are many different blogging platforms - some are free, some can be set up on your own website and some are existing websites where you create an account. Usually, an organisation sets up a blog as an extension to their website (e.g. as www.yourwebsite.com/blog). This sub folder structure also offers SEO value as well as boosting the social media visibility of your organisation. An alternative sub-domain structure (e.g. www.blog.yourwebsite.com) is also an option but this is considered by search engines as a separate website which means that you would gain no SEO benefits for your core website.

There are many different blogging platforms and software. The key to selecting the right platform depends upon your strategic goals and the KPIs you have defined. Some of the most common options for blogging are:

WordPress

WordPress is an open source blogging platform. This means that the software code is free and is developed by many thousands of people around the world. Because of its low cost, powerful features and wealth of themes and plugins, including the look and feel of the interface, it is used on a vast number of websites as both a blogging platform and content management system.

There are two options for *WordPress*,

- *WordPress.com* - is the 'hosted' version of *WordPress*, where you can set up a new blog very quickly. The basic functionality is free with some "paid for" additional features. This option is more suitable for individual bloggers. Blogs on wordpress.com rank well in search engine results pages, but there is no option for more advanced SEO configurations (such as the techniques described in Chapter 7).
- *WordPress.org* - supports the fully featured *WordPress* system. Essentially, *WordPress* can be set up on a web server and this will give you complete access to the look, feel and functionality of the website. Many organisations use this option as a content management system for their own website as well as using it as a blog. Many commercial web hosting companies offer *WordPress* installation as part of their web package for reasonably low cost. This is the option used by individuals and organisations to set up websites that require more customisation and functionality. With this version of *WordPress*, SEO plugins such as Yoast are available and these allow much more control over the search engine friendliness of your pages as well as giving you better data collection and analytics integration.

Blogger

Blogger.com is a *Google* owned platform specifically set up for blogging. Like WordPress.com it is a freely hosted service but has an entirely different look and feel. It is also possible to have your own domain name (e.g. www.yourwebsite.com) for free, in comparison, there is a cost for this option at Wordpress.com. Although the service is secure, *Google* has not updated *Blogger* for some time. There is some risk in using *Blogger* as the lack of updates has led to some public speculation that *Google* may eventually close down or move *Blogger* to another service.

8.8 Business to Consumer platforms

Facebook

Since its inception in 2004, *Facebook* has grown to become the largest social network with 1.59 billion monthly users globally as of the fourth quarter of 2015. Launched originally at Harvard University, it, it was then initially made accessible to other US universities. *Facebook* has now become the *de facto* platform for individuals to connect with friends and family. As a result of this focus, *Facebook* has also become an attractive channel for marketing. Organisations can create groups or fan pages as well as the option to buy *Facebook* advertising to reach customers. *Facebook* is a mechanism for reaching new customers and engaging existing customers with new content. The platform enables easy setup of competitions and as well as engaging in real time interactions.

Twitter

Twitter has been on the rise ever since it was launched in 2006. It is the best known example of a micro-blogging platform that allows users to communicate in a maximum of 140 characters referred to as 'tweets'. *Twitter* was the driving force behind the hashtag (#) concept which allows its users to identify a certain topic or conversation with an tagged keyword. *Twitter* boasted more than 320 million users and 1 billion unique monthly visits to sites with embedded tweets (December 2015). However, the *Twitter* system has struggled to capture a large share of the social network market. *Twitter* profiles are usually public by default, but in relatively rare cases they are set to private. Trending topics are a feature of *Twitter* real-time capabilities which allow users to see the currently most talked about topics. Communities thrive on *Twitter* because it is easy to use, easy to share tweets and works in real-time. *Twitter* content, as a result is highly responsive to current affairs and breaking stories which, in turn, makes Tweets more attractive to share.

Instagram

First released for public use in 2010, *Instagram* is a photo and video sharing app and is among the newest of the major social media channels. The platform has enjoyed rapid growth and engagement from users. There are now 400 million monthly active users on the platform (late 2015). The content that is shared is solely image based. This focus has helped to drive *Instagram*'s success as a result of the increasing image quality available through mobile phones. This image based focus has enabled individuals, organisations and brands to explore their creativity and to tell visual stories. Brands have have especially lauded the

platform for its ability to build a visual brand and gain a highly engaged audience. Acquired by *Facebook* in 2012, the platform introduced advertising in 2015.

8.9 Business to Business platforms

LinkedIn

Founded in 2002, *LinkedIn* is a business focussed social network, allowing users to post their professional work history, education and other professional achievements. *LinkedIn* is aimed at people who want to expand their professional networks as well as developing their career opportunities. The addition of company pages, and closed and open groups, allows conversations around business related topics. *LinkedIn* is primarily used in the English-speaking world, but is translated into over 20 languages including Arabic and Russian. Known primarily as a business to business (B2B) social network, the network is used to connect, promote and engage with new customers.

Xing and *Viadeo* are some of the European competitors to *LinkedIn* and offer similar functionality to link professionals together. The key differences between the platforms is one of language. *Viadeo* was founded in France in 2004 and has a total of about 65 million primarily French-speaking people (as of early 2016). *Xing*, founded in 2003, is popular amongst German speaking users and has over 10 million users (February 2016) in this core market. *Sina Weibo* is a Chinese solution to *Facebook* and *Twitter* and was launched in 2009. The platform has 222 million active users (September 2015).

YouTube / Vimeo

YouTube and *Vimeo* are video streaming services. Both are free to use but place certain limits on the videos that can be uploaded in terms of content and length. The usage figures for these platforms, *YouTube* in particular, are staggering, with people constantly choosing what they watch from billions of available professional or amateur video clips. Web video continues to be watched and created by a wide audience with popular content including, clips from favourite shows, 'how to' tutorial videos and even interactive or 3D content (which is often tagged as 'SBS' meaning side-by-side). Creating video content that your target audience will engage with and want to share should be a key aspect of your content sub-strategy. Videos hosted on these channels can be then embedded into your own web pages or blog post and shared on social media platforms.

Google+

Started in 2011, *Google+* ('Google plus') is *Google's* fourth social network project. The channel was significantly promoted by *Google*. Despite some impressive initial figures and close integration with search engine results, *Google* undertook a redesign and integrated with *Google Places*. *Google+* includes a timeline of events, discussion groups and *Google Hangouts*, which allows video conferencing between multiple people and the ability to record to *YouTube*. Some questions have been raised about the amount of interaction on the platform but there are other benefits for your organisation to be present *Google+*, particularly if you want to appear in *Google* Local search results. (see the local SEO discussion in Chapter 7).

WeChat

Released in China in 2011, the system has evolved from a simple chat app to a multi-functional tool with more than a billion registered accounts (early 2016). Although the majority of accounts are based in China, there is also a growing and significant percentage of users from outside China. *WeChat* enables videos and photos to be shared and altered, as well as video conferencing and collaborative games. The release of an API has also enabled an ecosystem of new apps to rapidly develop that range from support mechanisms to flight bookings.

8.10 Social media optimisation (SMO)

The main reason for measuring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in social media is enable you to look beyond headline figures such as the number of followers on *Twitter* or number of likes on *Facebook* and to drill down to your success in engaging with your buyer persona and achieving your strategic aims. In social media terms, you are aiming for engagement with creators and to convert lurkers into contributors. To achieve these aims you need to understand your buyer persona's social media interests and actions.

Understanding your buyer persona using social media data and tools

Your buyer persona uses various channels. They also create large volumes of data. You can also inhabit these environments and use their data to better understand your buyer persona (Atkinson 2015). Techniques such as Social Network Analysis (SNA) and netnography (Kozinets, 2015) can be used to better understand communities, gain key insights from market research and better understand the people who inhabit social media channels.

Netnography

Netnography is defined as a text-based output/result of digital/online environment/field work (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography is derived from the word ethnography (the study of people), but is specifically adapted to study online communities. Netnography has been described as quicker and cheaper than traditional ethnography and is more natural and unobtrusive than offline focus groups or interviews (Kozinets, 2002). The technique has been used for both academic and commercial market research. Listening to what people say online and how they interact are the central focal points of netnography. The careful analysis of conversations online is a vital tool to round out your knowledge and improve the description of your buyer persona. Simple analysis of conversations can be undertaken by constructing a wordle or word map from the text being analysed. In this way,, keywords and phrases can be identified in individual interactions as well as across entire communities. More sophisticated tools (e.g. *Radian 6*) can also create a concordance of terms that provide further context for the keywords that have been used.

Social network analysis (SNA)

The concept of analysing offline social networks with SNA has been part of research for many decades (Groeger and Buttle, 2014) and has been used to identify the structure of networks. These networks can assist in identifying the focus and types of social capital within a network and, ultimately, can map the influence on buyer behaviours. These tools for

SNA date back to around 2000 with the release of “network.S.tools”. SNA has been used to, for example,

- understand e-word of mouth marketing (e-WOM)
- identify key influential people within networks (Groeger and Buttle, 2014)
- discover how people connect with each other over time (Edwards, 2010)
- explore weak ties between people (Granovetter, 1973)
- identify key influencers, who are candidates for further qualitative analysis through netnography or interview (Griffiths & McLean, 2015)
- understand what social capital is (Widdop et al., 2014) and the “structure” and “form” of social relations (Jarman et al., 2015)

NodeXL, Gephi and Followerwonk

There are various tools that can be used for SNA. A form of analysis that can be computationally intensive (Butts, 2008). These tools can be used to produce data and visualisations of networks in order to understand the role of an individual in relation to their interactions with an online community (Jarman et al., 2015). *NodeXL* is a popular and low cost tool for conducting SNA by gathering data from *Twitter* into an *Excel* spreadsheet.

Gephi, which is not as functional for gathering social media data, but the visualisation tools can be more powerful and clearer than *NodeXL*. It is also possible to import data from *NodeXL* to *Gephi* to take advantage of the strengths of each programme and produce clearer visualisations of the social. Both *NodeXL* and *Gephi* require installation on your computer.

Another tool to gather social media data is *Followerwonk*. This online tool has the capability to visualise *Twitter* networks geographically and compare different user accounts. This comparison is not possible using *NodeXL* or *Gephi*. *Followerwonk* is used to understand where in the world potential fans are based and identify connections and new contacts based on the contacts of your competitors. It is possible to further look at the content of tweets from particular regions using *Followerwonk*.

In the Figure 8.5,, a network map of Salford City Football Club @salfordCityFC Twitter followers using *NodeXL*, it reveals the number of links and connections that the club account has with one of its owners - Gary Neville @GNev2. The figure also shows the links that exist between the Club’s other Twitter followers who are also connected to the Club’s official account.

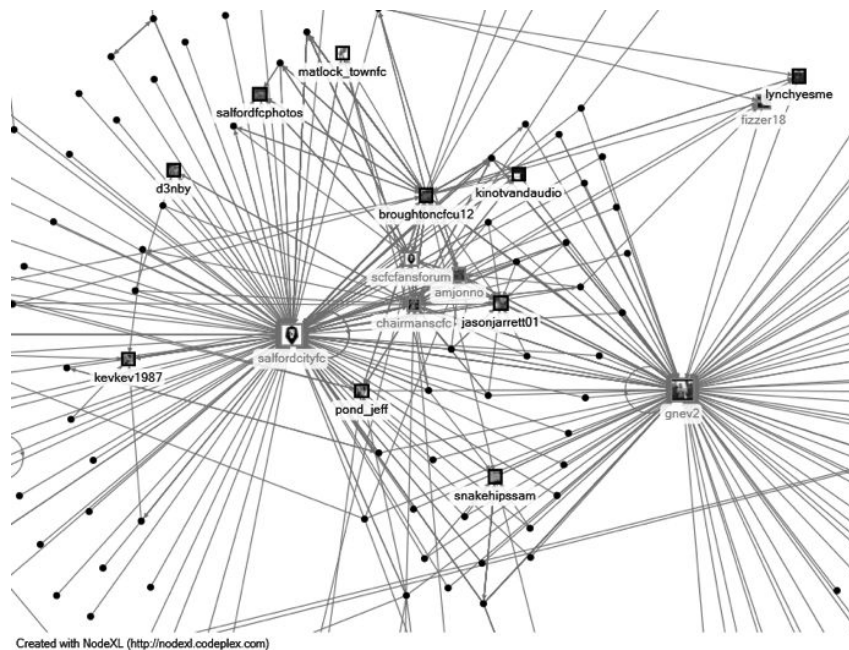


Figure 8.5: A network map of Salford City Football Club Twitter followers using NodeXL

Hashtags -

The word “hashtag” entered the dictionary in 2014. Hashtags are an important part of your social media activities as they offer a shared designation for all the interactions that happen in relation to a single topic. They take the format of a hash (#) character, followed by a word or words with no separating spaces. A multi-word example is this book’s own hashtag ‘#passion4digital’. Hashtags became popular on *Twitter* as they allowed users to separate and order their conversations and made it clear which topic they were communicating about. This trend for segmenting topics and conversations has been since picked up by other social media channels including *Facebook* which now allows users to tag their content to make it more discoverable.

There are no costs associated with hashtags and setting one up is as simple as adding a # to the front of a word, words (with no spaces) or a number. Hashtags work best when they are short and readable. Considering the number of Twitter users and volume of daily tweets it is important to check that nobody else is using your preferred hashtag. For example: #thenewmobilephonecampaign does not make a good hashtag as it is too long and the words blend into one another, sometimes forming unfortunate new words. Be creative and combine and shorten words into something that is original and distinctive for your organisation and its messages.

By setting up specific hashtag, make sure you publicise it well and use it in all your communications to encourage its wider use by your buyer persona. You should not try to ‘own’ your hashtag and keep it constrained but rather view it as a part of your brand collateral that you want to spread widely. For example, our book uses the hashtag #passion4digital - join in and share your thoughts with others about Digital Marketing.

Case Study 8.2: #LikeAGirl

Always target audience are female consumers looking for feminine products. In this case, *Always* have identified a challenge faced by their buyer persona - that is "being like a girl" has diminutive connotations and is sometimes even seen as an insult. In response, *Always* created an emotionally charged campaign that challenges the prevailing stereotype of girls as being inferior when it comes to engaging in sporty activities. The campaign is structured around a video that shows an audition for a video shoot where unsuspecting actors are asked to behave "like a girl". Both female and male actors are asked to simulate running, throwing and fighting. In the first half of the shoot the individuals are asked to perform the activity and then asked why they portrayed girls in an inferior way. The actors, once they had a chance to reconsider their actions - ,which could be interpreted as an insult to girls - are asked to re-shoot the scene again. The campaign used *YouTube* as the primary channel and allowed interaction in the comments. Since it engaged the target audience on an emotional level (see the discussion of what makes content viral in chapter 9) it reached lurkers as well as creators who were sharing and engaging with that video.

The video generated comments on *YouTube* and on a number of other social networks where the same hashtag #LikeAGirl was used. The hashtag is short, memorable with every word starting with a capital letter (sometimes called CamelCase) - this makes it easy to read and write. A Google Search Engine Results Page (SERP) for the term #LikeAGirl (Figure 8.6) is now consumed with *Always* related content and the results from *Twitter*, and *YouTube* all appear at the top.

All
Videos
Images
News
Shopping
More ▼
Search tools

About 418,000 results (0.62 seconds)


The #LikeAGirl Campaign - youtube.com

Ad
www.youtube.com/Always_LikeAGirl ▼

Check Out The Brand New Always #LikeAGirl Video Online Today!

Girl emojis · Confidence during puberty

#likeagirl on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/likeagirl> 

Always (@Always)

24 secs ago · View on Twitter

76% of girls think female emojis shouldn't only be portrayed doing feminine activities. Watch & share! #LikeAGirl

cards.twitter.com/cards/7...

Amanda DeVito (@AmandaDeVito)

19 mins ago · View on Twitter

Recent trend towards transformational leadership and its emphasis on empowerment and collaboration – #likeagirl.

Our Epic Battle #LikeAGirl | Always

always.com/en-us/about-us/our-epic-battle-like-a-girl ▼


Join Always in our epic battle to stop the drop in confidence girls experience at puberty. ... Let's champion all girls to be Unstoppable #LikeAGirl. ... See how we changed the meaning of "like a girl" from an insult to the ultimate compliment it really is!

Always #LikeAGirl - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjQBJWYDTs>

26 Jun 2014 · Uploaded by Always

Join Always in our epic battle to keep girls' confidence high during puberty and beyond. ... "When the words ...



▶ 3:19

Case Study: Always #LikeAGirl | D&AD

www.dandad.org/en/case-study-always-likeagirl/ ▼

#LikeAGirl. Always needed a way to appeal to a next generation of consumers in the face of growing competition from rivals that were gaining traction with ...

Images for #likeagirl

[Report images](#)




Figure 8.6: Always #LikeAGirl Google SERP

The SERP is also showing images as well as the video thumbnail - the use of images is an important SMO tactic.

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A picture is worth a thousand words

Visual material, in particular good quality images, are crucial for blogging and social media. Studies have consistently demonstrated that blog posts or social media posts that feature good quality and relevant images resonate with the audience. As a consequence these posts are more likely to motivate the audience to engage with and share content (Mawhinney, 2016).

Images can be obtained from a variety of sources. It is important that images are original, high quality and relevant. You should check that you have the rights to use an image for your intended specific purpose - this means that you should not use images found elsewhere on the Internet without purchasing or acquiring the image owner's permission. There are several places where you can obtain images,

- Stock libraries - free or paid. There are many libraries that offer relevant images for purchase or download. Do check the usage rights and fine print for what you are permitted to do with the images even if you have paid a rights fee.
- Take your own photos - Using your own camera or working with a photographer, either professional or amateur, produces original material that is customised to your brand.
- Creative Commons - was started as a way for people to relax the copyright of the materials that they create. You can search for Creative Commons images on sites like *Google* or *Flickr*. Check the usage rights carefully and these are different types of creative commons licenses and make sure the original author is always credited.

Working with images is easier with a good image editing package (*Photoshop* or *The GIMP*) and a basic working knowledge of image editing. Even learning just how to resize, crop, brighten and fix images in order to maximise the quality of your images will improve the quality of imagery that your brand presents to the world.

Customer Relationship Management Systems

A customer relationship management system (CRM) is a database of real customers or prospects contact details such as emails as well as their social media presences. This is a powerful tool and asset for any organisations and can be very important for digital marketing purposes since it allows you to segment and target customers with specific messages. One of the key benefits of a CRM system is the opportunity for marketing automation and the subsequent measurement of interactions. Automation also enables the use of regular email communications as well as traditional mail. A well maintained CRM system will offer clear insight into your buyer persona.

There are a number of CRM systems ranging from integrated website and email databases such as *HubSpot* which have a heavy price tag to systems that will be more relevant for smaller organisations that are free such as *Really Simple Systems CRM*. Having an email subscription option on your website or blog pages allows you to automatically populate your CRM with new prospects.

8.11 Finding Key Influencers

Using tools such as CRM system and social network analysis, you better know who your audience is, you can then identify appropriate social networks and find the key influencers who audiences that fit your brand. You can identify potential influencers using search engines (such as Google searches) and SNA as well as employing straightforward observation. These methods will also identify the locations where the interests you are targeting are being discussed and presented.

For example, if you are researching lifestyle or beauty and fashion, you will need to locate the digital presences of large fashion publishers who make use of guest and celebrity writers. These writers will often have their own blogs, *Instagram* account or *YouTube* content. These are the channels and specific locations where you also want to have visibility and reach out to these audiences and, ultimately, your buyer persona.

Once you have located communities that fits with your own brand's content, you can begin to identify the influencers in each of these communities. Learn the expected behaviours and culture of each community as a lurker before scaling up your activities as a contributor and then creator. Once you have established your credentials in the community reach out to the influencers in ways that fit the expected behaviours and culture of the specific community.

Contacting key influencers and building your own social capital is a key step in becoming part of a community. If you are approaching influencers with a reach that numbers in the hundreds of thousands or millions, you are going to have to stand out against a lot of noise. These are busy people who are used to - and largely immune to - a lot of contact requests and communications. Do something that makes you stand out to them in a way that catches their attention - for positive reasons - and starts the conversation off on a good note. A personalised, friendly message delivered through a social media platform such as *LinkedIn*, person to person, is better than a generic message that fill up an influencer's email inbox or *Twitter* timeline. Consider offering something helpful to them or a cause that they will be likely to support.

Becoming a key influencer

An influencer is someone who has authority and wide respect for their knowledge, experience or abilities around a topic. An influencer is a driving force in their subject area and will be a thought-leader in some way. If your aim is to become a key influencer you need to consider a number of separate issues.



Figure 8.7: Tweet by Mari Smith

Content - “Content is king, but engagement is queen and some say she rules the house” (Figure 8.7). There are clear synergies between good content and engagement. This synergy is a combination of creating and curating content that will thrive within your community and is the first step in becoming a key influencer. Give the buyer persona what they want (see the SEO and content marketing chapters), and more importantly, and can engage with.

Growth - Being able to grow your account on your platform of choice will boost your efforts to becoming a key influencer. The steps to boosting your efforts are platform dependent but generally involve you developing content and connecting with others who are positioning themselves as - or already are - key influencers. The basic element in growing your presence on any social platform is to follow those who you consider as your audience and to engage with them in relevant conversation. You want to be at the forefront of any emerging trend conversation. Your knowledge, and the opportunities to exhibit your knowledge, are invaluable opportunities to grow your audience and followers to a size that will have you regarded as an influencer.

Building an engaged community

Building a community on a social network can reap significant benefits. If it is done correctly. In recent years, both *UniLad* and *The Lad Bible* have revealed how social media has enabled a new trend in publishing. These communities have effectively killed off the printed ‘lads mag’ and grown their markets (and their value) to levels that print magazine could never have imagined. These social media publishers provide content that their audiences want to see, effectively collecting and curating content gathered from across the Internet around a particular topic and placing it in coherent streams on channels where audience interaction is a key element of the experience (*Facebook*). The *Lad Bible* now focuses heavily on delivering video content to *Facebook* - a result of a change in algorithm that positively encourages this form of content. As a result, the *Lad Bible* have reaped the rewards resulting from this change. What once started as a hobby, focussing on providing content, has become a community with millions of followers that can now be monetised for advertising purposes. Building a community online, in the right way, can be a game-changer. Building a community does not involve having to create a new platform but rather is about building an affiliation with your buyer persona in the right place in ways that fits into their lifestyle preferences and patterns including, most importantly, their channel preferences.

Building a community utilises the key same principles for becoming an influencer. You need to focus on content and growth. Knowing the places where to find your buyer persona well and working with creators in that space will make your community grow. Building an engaged community involves constantly giving out a high quality stream of content. *UniLad* and *Lad Bible* both spent three years building their model of giving before they were in a position to safely ask for something back from their audience. Community building equires a genuine passion for what the community says it is about, a degree of dogged perseverance and the constant building of trust. If you provide the audience with what it wants, you will reap the benefits - but it will take the commitment of time.

Creating a niche

Creating a niche enables you to build a community and deliver content to that community without any impartiality or opinion on the account. A niche begins without a brad sentiment. Lurkers are more likely to follow a niche if they cannot see an ulterior motive connected to it. Contributors and creators will participate if they recognise an opportunity and a USP within the niche.

Examples of successful niches include,

- @Love_Food on *Instagram* - a food page which posts visually appealing content of mouth-watering food and has gained over 6 million followers.
- @BeFitMotivation on *Twitter* - posts motivational quotes, body image goals and gym wear to an audience of over 1.5 million fitness fans
- @ProblemsAtUni on *Twitter* - is a student humour account revealing the pains of over 300,000 University residence dwellers all over the UK.

These niches thrive off sharing highly engaging content, usually curated from sources discovered all over the web, and are typically run by people who are personally and passionately interested in the niche. As a result these niches are regarded as genuine and informative. The pivotal element in creating a niche is to provide your audience with regular, relevant and high value content.

Creating a hook

Viral content on social platforms thrives by using recurring hooks and concepts that can be applicable to a broad range of topics. When a new trend comes along, the same concept can be applied and the hook refreshed to be relevant. An example of a very successful and effective hook created on UK social media was the use of the 'RT to save a degree' campaign for RefMe, a student referencing mobile app. The campaign was simple but highly effective and targeted towards student communities on *Twitter*. The content was simple. It consisted of three images showing how simple the process of referencing a book is by using the app. Supporting copy for the campaign focussed on the theme 'RT to save a degree' and contained a direct link to the App Store. The result of this campaign was many thousands of organic Re-Tweets and large volumes of app downloads. As a measure of the success of this campaign RefMe is now positioned as the referencing app of choice among UK students.

Trend awareness

Staying relevant on social media is key to becoming respected in your industry. If you can be aware of trends within your niche you will be at the forefront of conversations. You can go further by taking trend awareness and translating it to engaging content. Trend awareness will also position you as a key influencer. Talking about trend awareness involves drawing in the latest conversations around your interests and not simply being aware of Trending Topics on *Twitter*. One eye on Trending Topics is useful as this will highlight the things that the world is talking about in real-time. Do not focus on the idea of getting something 'trending' as trending topic isn't the source of the true value. Trending statistics are only a byproduct of creating relevant, engaging conversations around a certain topic. If this conversation is done correctly it will organically spread across the social web, and will eventually become a trending topic as a reward for its engaging nature.

Reputation management

Trust is an essential element of social media and should be embedded in all of your engagement and outreach activities. Trust in your brand is what makes someone confident to complete your calls to action, including purchasing. Trust also interacts with social capital in residing between individuals and brands and the individuals that represent brands (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Building brand engagement and increasing your social capital, as well as looking after and rewarding key influencers all build trust and nurture communities. Trust takes a long time to establish but is easy to lose.

Based on the conformity concept, widely known in sociology, people tend to follow the lead of others. For example, in a study exploring online purchase decisions it was found that the opinions of peers had a direct impact on the decision being made (Wang, et. al., 2012) because people wanted to be part of a group and wanted to take an informed decision. If your organisation can work with creators, your community can be encouraged to participate in low level activities such as sharing feedback. Relevant networks such as *Google Maps* review, *TrustPilot*, *TripAdvisor*, *Feefo* and others dependent on your niche all provide the mechanisms to engage your community and to encourage them to publicly articulate their trust in your organisation, its products and services, and its brands. Once you choose your preferred reviewing system, direct your customers to leave a review, in particular those that are enthusiastically positive about your service. Some of the most successful *TripAdvisor* organisations are not necessarily great in what they do but they are great in encouraging their happy customers to share their reviews online. With any system that you choose you must regularly monitor and reply to both negative as well as positive comments. Take note of common themes of complaint and genuinely act upon these with real resolutions and personalised comments. Do not be tempted to use website such as www.fiverr.com which offer "genuine reviews". These are not only unethical but are also easily identified as false signals. Prioritise encouraging genuine review processes in your organisation including emailing your customers after a purchase and asking for a review. Consider offering guidelines on how to create and to access review pages. Not all of your users are familiar with these systems.

Monitor your social media profiles regularly and have a team of people who would reply to complaints. It is generally accepted that a complaint is taken offline since you do not really want to discuss the negative experience of your customers in front of others. Most people

are reasonable and are happy to comply with your request to share a phone number for a private discussion of the issues being raised. However, in situations where unhappy customers are unreasonable, and you feel that the case cannot be resolved offline, and you have tried reasonable ways of resolving an argument, you can explore the option of answering the complaint publicly as well as offering other community members the option to contribute to the same conversation. Whichever way you resolve complaints it must be one of the entries in your risk register for monitoring and mitigation (see the discussion about project management in Chapter 5).

8.12 Summary

This chapter discusses some of the key principles of social media and its role in digital marketing. Social media is an increasingly important way to engage customers for any organisation that wants a successful digital presence. Strategic commitment to using social media platforms requires the allocation of tools and resources to the four areas of marketing, sales, operations and support.

Social capital is a central way to understand your social media audience and to measure the success of your engagement with your buyer persona. You are also building trust and bonding social capital between your organisation and your buyer persona. This chapter also outlines many other reasons for using social media including the creation of synergies for search engine optimisation (SEO) and the multiple benefits of creating a blog.

The reasons for measuring of social media activities will depend on your strategic and operational reasons for using these channels - but irrespective of the strategic aims you have your organisation should monitor and measure its social media activities. Social media is broadly divided in this chapter into professional networks that are more focused on business to business industries and private networks used more for business to consumer interactions.

Social media cannot be controlled but it should not be ignored either. It is a powerful way to communicate with your buyer persona and achieve your strategic goals.

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